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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5351
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0335
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0056
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1056
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2784
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1508
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0736
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 3093
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 7317

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 001006

SIPDIS

FOR PM/PPA - DGLANCY, EUR/RPM - PCHISHOLM, AND AF/RSA -
JBANDO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCA](#) [WFP](#) [XW](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ESCORT ASSISTANCE FOR WORLD FOOD
PROGRAM SHIPMENTS TO SOMALIA

REF: STATE 100149

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Arnold A. Chacon, Reasons 1.4b,
d.

11. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Spanish MFA Assistant Deputy Political Director Maria Luisa Benitez-Donoso, who noted Spain sent a plane to the region last week to protect Spanish fishing vessels. She acknowledged our request for coordination with other efforts in the region. Polcouns also delivered reftel demarche to MOD Deputy Director General for Policy Javier Munoz Castresana, who said it would be very difficult for Spain to devote a ship to the WFP mission when it did not have sufficient resources on scene to protect its own fishing fleet.

12. (C) Spain announced September 17 that it was sending a P-3 and 90 support personnel to Djibouti to conduct surveillance operations directed against the Somali pirates. Sending the plane was described publicly as a "first step." The MOD said the plane's mission would be prevention rather than deterrence. It would warn fishermen of the presence of pirates. Admiral Rebollo, the new head of the Spanish Navy, acknowledged to the Ambassador September 18 that the deployment was little more than a political gesture. A single patrol plane, unsupported by any surface vessels, can do little.

13. (C) Comment: Post has discussed the issue of Somalia piracy on numerous occasions with the GOS since a Spanish fishing vessel was captured in April 2008. As we have reported, the GOS has repeatedly expressed its interest in mounting an operation to enforce UNSCR 1816, but does not wish to do so alone. Spain has said it would welcome U.S. assistance. The GOS is supportive of French efforts to mount an EU response, but would be interested in any option that would put assets on scene quickly. Spain is unlikely to agree to move discussion of the issue from the EU to NATO absent some indication NATO is serious about mounting an operation. The Spanish tuna fleet, which operates out of the Seychelles, will probably be working off Somalia through November. The Zapatero Government is anxious to avoid another humiliation but faces serious logistical and legal hurdles (no one we have talked to is sure how to prosecute any pirates they might capture) in mounting an anti-piracy mission so far from any Spanish port. Given its own challenges in protecting its fishing fleet and the intense political pressure here to do so, it is unlikely Spain can or

will devote resources to protecting WFP convoys; however, we will continue to urge the GOS to coordinate any actions it does take off Somalia with NATO and any other forces operating in the area now or in the future.

Aguirre